



"Hello, Little One!"

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## THE ASSOCIATED SANTA CLAUS

By CHARLES FREDERIC GILLIAM

"HELLO, George, what's the matter with you?" asked Will James, as George Johnson stepped into his office in one of the sky-scrapers, and sank wearily into a chair.

"I'm clear fagged out," was the reply. "Do you know, this Christmas business is something awful?"

"James laughed. "Are you finding that out for the first time?"

"No, but it seems worse than usual



Joy Over a Cherished Toy.

this time. It appears that my folks have nearly every little thing they need, and when I find some particular thing that strikes my fancy, it costs so much, by the time I even up all around, I can't afford it."

"Well, if misery loves company, you've got plenty of it. We're all in the same box. I confess it strains me

so that it takes all the pleasure away from the giving, because the expense is really greater than I can afford."

"That's it exactly. It wouldn't be so bad if the gifts were restricted to one's own family, but some relative or friend makes some of the family a present and it has to be met in kind, or with something a little better, in order to relieve one's self of the sense of obligation. If these presents were all dictated by affection, a fellow wouldn't object to making considerable sacrifices, but when a large proportion are merely for the purpose of keeping even, it's a horse of another color."

"Yes, and our most expensive presents go to those who are better fixed financially than ourselves, and who have the least need for them. Why, just last week one of my nieces, who is in very moderate circumstances, and of whom I think a good deal, was married, and we sent her a piece of plated silverware that cost four dollars. At the same time we sent Miss DeForrest for her wedding present a cut glass dish that cost \$15, and she'd hardly recognize us if we met her on the street."

"I'm glad you told me that, Will. I had a sort of a sneaking idea that I was about the biggest fool in town in that direction, but I guess you and your family and I and my family and everybody else and his family are all in the same boat. But what's to be done? Can't we make a declaration of independence? My wife and I make resolves every year, but we keep stretching the limit a little, until by the time we get through the list we find we have sent more than the preceding year."

"I'm with you on two things, George; that is, that we economize some on our expenditures, and that what we do spend shall be in a way to bring most enjoyment to ourselves,

by giving the most enjoyment to others. Let's give, what we give outside our own families, to those who need it."

"I don't think I follow you exactly."

"Well, take myself, for instance. I am very fortunate if I get off with a hundred dollars. How much does it cost you?"

"I can't say definitely, but fully that much, I should judge."

"Suppose, then, we take our families into the scheme with us and agree to spend only \$50 for ourselves. Then we can spend \$25 each for a number of worthy poor families who are unable to provide for themselves, out of the ordinary, yet too proud or have too much self-respect to avail themselves of the public charities on that day. In that way we would be \$25 ahead, and at the same time be able to furnish 10 or 15 families with a turkey and the other necessities for a good Christmas dinner, and some candies and toys for the children."

"Good for you, Will, that suits me down to the ground, and I know my wife will be right in for it."

"I'm glad it strikes you so favorably, George. But if it's a good thing for us two, why not push it along a little? What's the matter with getting four or five or a half dozen of the other boys interested?"

"Nothing at all. There's Scott and Corwin and Wilson and Thompson and Smith, all of 'em good, whole-souled fellows, and all here in the building. Suppose I 'phoned 'em to come up, and we'll talk the matter over. They're all pretty well fixed, too, and I believe will be glad to take a hand."

"Just the thing, George. The sooner we take hold and get it under way, the better."

Accordingly an urgent message was telephoned in a half jovial, half mysterious way, to each one mentioned, to come to James' office at once on important business. All responded promptly, undecided as to whether it meant a practical joke or business of pressing importance.

Will called the meeting to order in a very formal manner and requested George to state its purpose.

Every one seemed to enter into the spirit of the object of the meeting, as well as into the half jovial, half formal, parliamentary manner in which it was conducted, and they were soon discussing the various suggestions offered with the enthusiasm

and abandon of a lot of school boys.

While there was no posing as philanthropists, there was a whole-souled spirit of consideration shown for the worthy unfortunate, that gave them a much deeper insight into each others' characters and drew them into closer bonds of sympathy than would a year of ordinary intercourse.

It was found that after they had all pledged themselves to the fund in accordance with the rule laid down, as to ability and percentage of ordinary expenditure, there would be something over a hundred and fifty dollars available.

It being essential to the carrying out of their plan that their families should be interested, a meeting was called for a subsequent evening at the residence of Mr. Corwin, at which all were represented.

The ladies and other members of the families entered into the movement with even more enthusiasm than the organizers. Before the labor was completed of making out the list of those to be aided and the various things to be contributed to each one, several meetings were required. More enjoyment came from these meetings, twice over, than if the money expended had been for gifts for themselves.

The organization was kept secret from the public, but at the laughing suggestion of Mr. Scott, adopted the name: "The Associated Santa Claus." With each basket delivered late or Christmas eve, at the door of various homes, was an envelope addressed to the recipient, containing a postal directed to "The Associated Santa Claus," Box 619, City; requesting that the receipt of the basket be acknowledged, so that it might be known that it had not gone astray.

It is not the province of this story to tell of the joy of the little children in these 30 or 40 homes, over the receipt of some cherished toy and the ever welcome candy and nuts, or of the heart-felt gratitude of the parents that, for that one day of all others their families had been permitted to partake of the comfort and luxury of a well filled table.

At the final meeting of the year, held the night after Christmas, at which the acknowledgments were read to the association, more than one woman's eyes were brimming with tears, and more than one man had a lump in his throat that was difficult to swallow, as he listened to the burning words of gratitude, for the joy that had been brought to their homes. Some were expressed in unconfined, and some in the most refined language, but all bore the impress of sincerity.

There was not a dissenting voice when Mr. Wilson presented the following resolution:

Resolved, That the Christmas just passed has been the happiest one of our lives, and that we continue, as a permanent organization, "The Associated Santa Claus."—Ohio Magazine

### HE NEARLY FORGOT.

Santa Claus May Be a Little Slow But Always Sure.

The old fiddler had been rasping away since three o'clock for the children's party, and it was not till nearly nine that he was told that they had danced enough, that he might go into the butler's room to get himself some supper, that, in short he might go home. But the old fiddler wanted no supper. All he wanted was the sovereign he had to receive for his six hours' hard work. He was a bent, threadbare, worn, old fiddler, but when he left the great house his feet seemed to spring beneath him.

With his fiddle tucked under his arm, he set out for home, chuckling within himself for very joy.

At the corner there was a toy-shop. It was shut up, of course, but he knocked at the private door, and persuaded the proprietor to sell him a horse. It was quite a wonderful horse—made of wood, with a red saddle, and mane all complete. Then he went home—up the long, creaking staircase—up and up, till a shrill voice greeted him.

"Did you meet Santa Claus?" said the little voice.

"Yes, I met him at the corner," said the fiddler. And he told me to give you this."

"I thought he'd forgotten," said the little voice, almost choked with glee. "Christmas is nearly gone."

"He did nearly forget," said the old man slyly. "But not quite. Santa Claus never quite forgets."

"I speak," said the little voice, "Santa Claus had so many little boys to go to, he couldn't get here any earlier. I hope he hasn't forgotten any other little boys."

EDITH KINSLEY.

Prior to the Estimate.

"Yes, little girl," said the kind old man with the white whiskers. "I have an immense candy-store, and for Christmas I am going to give you all the candy you can eat."

"Oh, goody!" cried the little girl, dancing about with happiness.

"Now," continued the kind old man, "how much candy can you eat?"

"How much candy have you got?"—Judge.

## FOR TRIFLING ILLS

IMPORTANCE OF SOME KNOWLEDGE OF MEDICINE.

Ailments Likely to Become Serious Can Be Checked in Their Incipency if One Understands How to Deal with Case.

It is a good thing for at least one member of every family to have a little knowledge of medicines, in case of emergency, and the information should be acquired by one sufficiently interested to make some study of the matter. Some people regard minor ailments as too trifling for any attention, while others grant so much importance to slight disturbances that there is eventually great waste of time and money. It would seem that some one in a family who would observe carefully, storing valuable knowledge by experience, and who would study trustworthy sources, would prove to be an indispensable comfort in the home. She will know just when the doctor is needed, and just what to do without him, or to assist, and in that knowledge will show herself as praiseworthy as a thrifty housewife or a matchless cook.

There are so many emergencies for which frail humanity must be prepared that one short article could scarcely begin the long list. But the following few suggestions may serve as the first guide post on this particular path of research. Cause, prevention and cure should be the systematic divisions of this study. "Colds" are concerning a good many households just now; it is always so at the change of seasons. Impure air is a powerful ally of this disease. It may be in a bedroom, a schoolroom, a public hall, a crowded drawing room. There is more illness caused by defective ventilation than by draughts. If one is exposed to the latter, and yet is warmly clad and moving briskly, there is no danger. The factor most potent in resisting cold is a healthy circulation of blood; such a condition cannot exist for a moment without pure air.

Preventives of cold and its various catarrhal conditions consist chiefly in common sense, that rarest of all virtues. That means keeping the body sturdy in all its vulnerable points—a throat that is used to exposure, a head that often goes hatless, feet that may get wet without harm (providing they are resoled as soon as inactive), a body that never feels the cold when it is hurrying about in fresh air. The cure of colds is a simple matter if begun in time. The first signs of cold should be the signal for treatment.

Then there are such little troublesome matters as nosebleeds, earache, inflamed eyes, mouth sores and the large and various number of ills resulting from fever and deep-rooted disease. The amateur student of these difficulties should not rely upon her scrapbook when biding emergencies. She should learn by heart her store of wisdom, and above all things cultivate good judgment.

### Press Cake.

Two and a half cupfuls sugar, one cupful butter, four cupfuls flour, one cupful milk, four eggs, one-half teaspoonful soda (no more). Bake in three sheets. To the third portion add one tablespoonful molasses, one cup raisins, one cup currants, one teaspoonful of all kinds of spices, three teaspoonfuls wine or brandy. Put jelly between layers; press under a board and a flatiron four hours; frost and put it where the flies can't get it.

### Unusual Recipe for Cooking Onions.

The onions, which should be of the large Bermuda variety, should be boiled until nearly soft, but still firm. Stuff with a filling made of any convenient chopped meat, one hard-boiled egg, salt and pepper to taste and a quarter of a cupful of chopped nuts. Sprinkle cracker crumbs over the whole, and on top of each onion lay a thin slice of bacon. Bake for half an hour.

### Morning Glories.

Morning glories can be raised in the house during the winter. Planted in pots they will bloom in about seven weeks. Put three or four seeds in each pot and place near a window, and put tumbler over them until they begin to sprout. Let them run on a basket or piece of featherbone, and when it is nearly covered bend it over and stick the other end in the pot and there will be a circle of blossoms. Nasturtiums may be grown in the same way.

### Celery in Cheese Shell.

Cut the celery stalks into inch pieces, cook until tender in boiling water, slightly salted. For three cupfuls of the cut celery allow a pint of white sauce, using the water in which the celery was cooked, with the cream as the liquid. Turn into the shell of a pineapple cheese, cover with half a cupful of fine cracker crumbs, mixed with two tablespoonfuls of melted butter, and let it brown in the oven. Serve with powdered cheese. Edam cheese shells can be utilized in the same manner.